

Appl. No. 10/088,808
Amdt. dated 12/08/2005
Reply to Office Action of 12/05/2005

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-11 (Cancelled)

12. (Original): A sterilizing block for use in an airspace within a container, comprising:

- (a) a sterilizing composition comprising a sulphur dioxide activating compound wherein moisture absorbed by the block reacts with the sulphur dioxide activating compound to form sulphur dioxide;
- (b) a water-soluble organic acid; and
- (c) a corresponding water soluble salt of the organic acid.

13. (Original): A sterilizing block according to claim 12, wherein the water soluble organic acid and the corresponding water soluble salt of the organic acid each comprise 2-5 percent by weight of the total weight of the sterilizing composition.

14. (Original): A sterilizing block according to claim 12, wherein the water soluble organic acid comprises 1 to 3 carboxylic acid groups, and the corresponding salt is selected from the group consisting of a magnesium salt, a sodium salt, and a potassium salt.

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15. (Original): A sterilizing block according to claim 12, wherein the block is selected from the group consisting of a solid gel block, a tablet of consolidated powder and a tablet of consolidated granules.

16. (Original): A sterilizing block according to claim 12, wherein the sulphur dioxide activating compound is a metabisulphite.

17. (Original): A sterilizing block according to claim 16, wherein the metabisulphite is selected from the group consisting of sodium metabisulphite or potassium metabisulphite.

18. (Original): A sterilizing block according to claim 12, wherein the container is a diaper pail or medical hazardous waste disposal container.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

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23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended): A method of sterilizing an airspace within a container, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing:
 - (i) a sterilizing composition comprising a ~~sulpher~~ sulphur dioxide activating compound wherein moisture within the container reacts with the sulphur dioxide activating compound to form sulphur dioxide;
 - (ii) a water-soluble organic acid; and
 - (iii) a corresponding water soluble salt of the organic acid;
- (b) forming the sterilizing composition into a block; and
- (c) placing the block into the container, the airspace within which is to be sterilized.

27. (Original): A method according to claim 26, wherein the water soluble organic acid and the corresponding water soluble salt of the organic acid each comprise 2-5 percent by weight of the total weight of the sterilizing composition.

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28. (Original): A method according to claim 26, wherein the water soluble organic acid comprises 1 to 3 carboxylic acid groups, and the corresponding salt is selected from the group consisting of a magnesium salt, a sodium salt, and a potassium salt.

29. (Original): A method according to claim 26, wherein the step of forming the composition into a block comprises the step of forming the composition into an block selected from the group consisting of a solid gel block, a tablet of consolidated powder and a tablet of consolidated granules.

30. (Original): A method according to claim 26 wherein the sulphur dioxide activating compound is a metabisulphite.

31. (Original): A method according to claim 30, wherein the metabisulphite is selected from the group consisting of sodium metabisulphite or potassium metabisulphite.

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32. (Original): A method according to claim 26, wherein the step of placing the block into a container comprises the step of placing the block into a diaper pail or medical hazardous material disposal container.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Cancelled)